REMARKS

Claims 14-31 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 14, 18 and 22 are independent.

Claims 14, 16-17 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Blew, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,448,670). Claims 15, 18-21 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blew as applied above, and further in view of the admitted prior art Greenwood, et al. (U.S. patent No. 6,389,787). Applicants thank the Examiner for having indicated that claims 24-31 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicants have amended claim 15 to correct the minor informality. It is respectfully submitted that all claims pending are in condition for allowance.

For the following reasons, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 14, 16-17 and 22 for being anticipated by Blew.

The present invention relates to a method for producing an optical transmission cable wherein at least one tube with optical fibers is twisted about a central strengthening member using a tubular machine so as to form a homogeneous peripheral layer around said central strengthening member.

An essential technical feature of claims 14 and 22 is the use of a tubular machine unlike the prior art, which used a planetary machine. Another aspect of the present invention is that the peripheral layer around the central strengthening member comprises not only a peripheral strengthening member but a tube with optical fibers as well. In this context Applicants refer the Examiner to present Figure 4, which diagrammatically shows a cross-section of a cable having

two peripheral layers, i.e. an inner peripheral layer comprising tube 1 with optical fibers 2 and secondly strengthening members 3. The outer peripheral layer comprises strengthening members 5, which are wound around the inner peripheral layer.

Blew relates to a method for making a fiber optical communications system without using a tubular machine as recited in present claim 14. In addition, the self-supporting cable as shown in Figure 4 of Blew, as well as the self-supporting cable as shown in Figure 6 of Blew are basically different than the optical transmission cable to be made according to present method 14.

In Blew, the fiber optical cable 20, as shown in Figure 4, includes a core, including a buffer tube 31 and a pair of diametrically opposed strength members 34 extending lengthwise adjacent to core. The self-supporting cable 20' (see Figure 6) includes a core formed of a plurality of buffer tubes 31' surrounding a central support member 36. The elliptical jacket 35' has a major transverse axis 37' aligned with the pair of strength members 34'.

Blew does not disclose a peripheral layer around a central strengthening member, the peripheral layer comprising peripheral strengthening members and at least one tube with optical fibers to ensure said peripheral layer is homogeneous. Such a construction of a peripheral layer cannot be found in Figures 4 or 6 of Blew. Thus, it is submitted that the § 102(b) rejection of independent claims 14 and 22, and dependent claims 16 and 17 is improper and should be withdrawn.

With respect to the 103(a) rejection of independent claim 18 based on Blew and Greenwood, Applicants submit that Greenwood does not compensate for the deficiencies noted

above with respect to Blew - i.e., use of a tubular machine. Production line 10 according to Greenwood includes an optical ribbon strander 12, wherein the rotating closing dye 30 includes a rotating stack guide 31, including a stack aperture 32 to receive a stack of optical fiber ribbons 18. Stack guide 31 includes a drive interface surface 35 that can interface with a belt or other suitable device for causing rotation of stack guide 31. Greenwood does not disclose twisting one tube with optical fibers about a central strengthening member using a tubular machine.

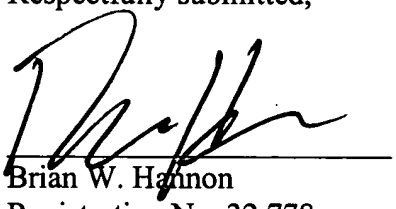
Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art does on teach or suggest providing the strengthening element on a reel closest to the greasing tank, as claim 18 requires; certainly Greenwood does not address this feature of the invention recited in claim 18.

On basis of the above information it would not have been obvious at the time of the invention to one skilled in the art to combine the apparatus according to Greenwood with the apparatus of Blew in order to arrive at invention recited in claim 18.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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